



Can You Feel It?

By: Ginger Duiven, Executive Director

With winter on the run, the energy in the air all around us has shifted. Have you noticed it too? People are just a bit more upbeat, quick to share an easy smile and offer a couple of friendly words of greeting. So it is in the classrooms and halls of Literacy Services. There is a definite buzz as our classrooms fill each day. The sounds of tutors and students working together side by side or across the desk make the place vibrate with energy. Exclamations at an “ah-ha” learning moment, the quiet repetition of sounds and words being mastered, the patient explanations, the practiced and the mastered recitations, the inquiries and answers add to the buzz. There are the soundless contributions to the energy too: eyes looking up searching the sky for the answer just out of reach, the determined squint at the computer screen, the focused attention on a writing assignment. And there are smiles shared between adults working together to unlock their potential.

Yes, unlock *their* potential. Because, if I learned anything about this magical place, I have learned that it's both adults in the learning partnership between tutor and student who are unlocking potential. The tutors are unlocking their knowledge, their compassion, and their abilities to teach, share, encourage and believe in someone.



They bring their hope and courage that what they know and their ability to share will help somebody else who wants it. The student is engaged in the very human act of daring greatly. He is daring to believe that he can change his life, he can learn even if he's been told he can't, he dares to believe he is up to the challenges ahead despite the odds, the barriers, the risks and the past.

This energy is created and sustained by the reciprocity of giving and growing. When you meet someone where they are, open yourself to them, and then work together on a shared goal it is quite possibly one of the most rewarding of human experiences. The results are often surprising and may not be what either the tutor or the student expected. The combined energy definitely equals more than two.

This work changes the world, two flourishing people at a time. I can feel the energy, can you?

Literacy Services is in need of more volunteers to keep the energy going and growing. Do you know someone who is ready to unlock their potential and has 90 minutes to give each week? We need more tutors in all of our programs now. Do you know someone who would like to help but can't spare that much time consistently? We have a new volunteer position, Advancement Coach, which requires less of a time commitment. Check out the volunteer job description on page 3 to learn more. Our next volunteer orientation session is May 21st, at noon.

Please save the date for our 50th Anniversary Celebration Dinner. September 17, 2015 at 5:30pm we will gather to celebrate through the stories of those have lived this experience.

We hope you will join us!

The Syllabus

Literacy Services of Wisconsin Newsletter

The Syllabus is the quarterly newsletter of
Literacy Services of Wisconsin,
a 501c3 nonprofit organization.

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Founded in 1965, Literacy Services serves adult learners with quality education programs - Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Education Development (GED) test preparation, English Language Learning (ELL) - and integrated and personalized Functional Literacy instruction.

Our mission is to educate, motivate and inspire engaged adults to achieve greater independence and transform their lives. We are grateful for the broad support of our community, including over 400 volunteers and financial support from 883 individuals, 186 foundations, corporations and organizations, The United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County, and funds administered by Wisconsin Technical College System Adult Education and Family Literacy.

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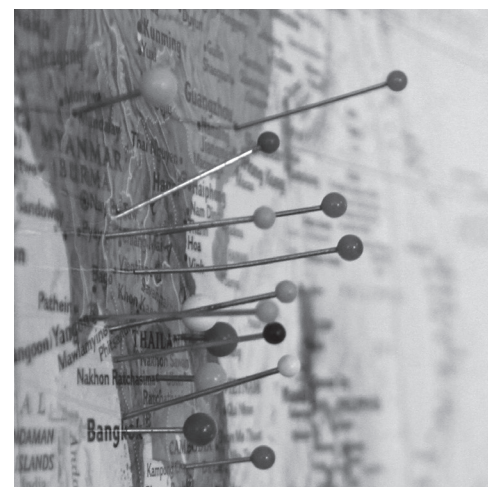
Learning Curve

By: Julie Clark, Director of English Language Learning

As the new director of the ELL program here at Literacy Services, I am experiencing an incredible learning curve, and I mean that in the most positive of ways. I spent most of my career as a teacher in the Milwaukee Public Schools, first as an English teacher, then as a teacher of Spanish. I loved working with teenagers and very much enjoyed all of my years of teaching. When I retired last May, I felt like I was leaving at a high point; a school I loved and a senior class which had grabbed hold of my heart and didn't let go.

I wanted to continue working after retirement, but not with the intensity and pressure of full time teaching. It took almost ten months of looking before I found what I consider the perfect job for me. From the moment I walked into Literacy Services, I was struck by the welcoming atmosphere. Once I began to interact with our students, I was struck by something else. The two things that impressed me the most were the determination to learn on the part of the students and the willingness to give of their time and talent on the part of our volunteers. I truly feel honored to be spending my days in the company of such wonderful people.

I entitled this reflection "Learning Curve" because the job of ELL Program Director requires me to draw on the many skills I used as a teacher, but it also challenges me to develop new skills as I become familiar with



our resources and try to guide and support tutors in their work. Each pairing of tutor and student is unique, and I am learning to respond to all of their individual questions. I am humbled by the students' determination to meet the educational goals they outlined when they started the program. I also have to admit how much I am learning about geography as each conversation I have with a student ends up in front of the map we have hanging in the ELL classroom. We explore the colorful pins marking Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Peru, and all the other countries our students come from.

The wall of windows that surrounds our classroom lets in lots of sunshine but gives us a limited view of Milwaukee. The view we have inside the classroom is much larger. It is worldwide and we are learning more every day.

Arrivals and Departures

Earlier this year, the Director of English Language Learning, Nancy Ignacio, and the Assistant Director, Maxime Peeters, departed Literacy Services to pursue new chapters in their lives outside of the state of Wisconsin. We treasure the time we shared with both of them and wish them well on their individual journeys forward. We moved quickly to overcome the loss of these two amazing people by hiring Julie Clark into the role of Director and by transitioning Amanda Pierce from her internship in our GED program to the Assistant Director position. Once again, our program is whole and fully stocked with talented and caring education experts.



Nancy



Maxime



Amanda



ABE Unveils New Curriculum

By: Kelly Fox, Director of Adult Basic Education

The landscape of adult education is changing. The new GED has become harder to attain. Students will need a higher degree of writing ability to articulate more complex thought processes, and basic computer skills will be necessary now that the tests are computer-based. As the tests have gotten harder, GED preparation has become more rigorous, and more adults fall into the category of Pre-GED – that is, they need help with basic skills before they are ready for the harder work

These new challenges compelled us to reevaluate the Pre-GED offerings within the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program to ensure our services are aligned to help students achieve their academic goals. The Pre-GED curriculum must adequately prepare our students for the rigors of GED work, to help ensure their success in that program and beyond. Further, the acquisition of basic skills must be hastened, to prepare students and keep them flowing through ABE into the GED program at a faster rate than in the past. In the last quarter of 2014, ABE program staff created a set of materials to accelerate progress for Pre-GED students. After a

successful pilot with several students, we feel confident about the efficacy of the new Pre-GED Language and Reading materials. Our evidence shows that the new materials are helping students rapidly improve their skills and achieve the assessment thresholds necessary to move on. As we continue to transition all Pre-GED students to the new learning materials, we are excited to introduce two additions into the curriculum: writing practice and computer-assisted vocabulary work. These improvements will provide our students with a comprehensive educational experience.

As a requirement for completion of Pre-GED and transition to the GED program, students will need to demonstrate proficiency on five groups of academic vocabulary words, which they will study on a customized website. The online application provides students with flashcards, study games, and tests to master dozens of vocabulary words. This computer-assisted vocabulary work will help strengthen students' basic computer skills as well as improve their lexicons. Students and tutors who have begun using

this new digital learning tool have expressed a great deal of excitement and we are thrilled to receive such positive feedback!

To expand our service offerings further, we have begun to offer computer-aided instruction to beginning-level students upon enrollment. Beginning-level students represent the greatest demand in our community and as a result, often had to wait for months before we were able to serve them. Computer-aided instruction, delivered with the help of volunteers known as Advancement Coaches, allows us to provide valuable services to a larger number of students and eliminates the need for waiting lists. We are looking for more volunteers to become Advancement Coaches, to help us give our students greater access to learning and accelerate their progress towards achieving their educational goals. As always, it is the dedication and perseverance of our amazing volunteers who keep our momentum going and for that, we are ever thankful!



Volunteer Opportunity:

Advancement Coach

The Advancement Coach is a volunteer who helps newly enrolled students acclimate to our organization, making them feel welcome, safe, and encouraged to pursue their educational goals. Advancement Coaches are compassionate, patient individuals who provide support in the following ways:

- Facilitate orientations for new students (i.e., agency tour, parking information, paperwork assistance)
- Assist students with creating online profiles for our customized vocabulary website; provide tutorials and support to get students started and keep them going
- Help program staff track student progress

Advancement Coaches are trained and coordinated by the ABE program staff. We ask Advancement Coaches to commit to a regular schedule; the commitment can be daily, weekly, monthly, or as otherwise agreed upon with the ABE Program Director. Interested persons should email kelly@literacyservices.org for more information.



At Their Best: Richard and Charleen

By: David Peters, Director of GED

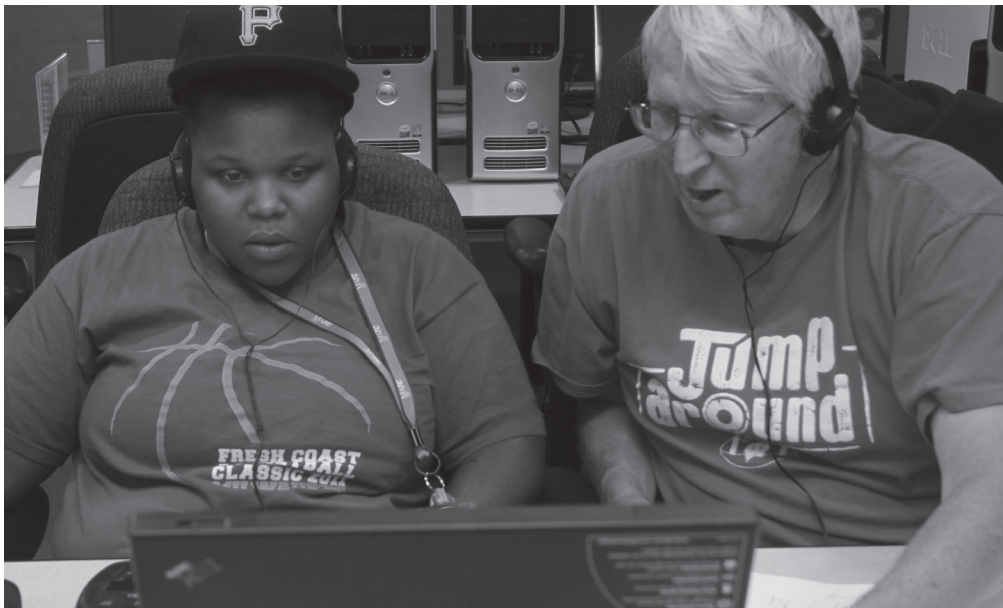
One of the reasons I enjoy my work at Literacy Services is that it provides me with a daily opportunity to see people at their best. Adult students bring a commitment, intensity, and earnestness to their effort born out of necessity and a desire to grow.

The tutors are volunteers. Yet, despite all the other things they could be doing with their time, they return week after week and year after year to continue addressing the need manifest in the lives of the students.

The combination of dreams, determination, and sometimes desperation brought by the student mixed with the guidance, encouragement, and the gift of a tutor's time often yields something special. This is true in the case of many of Literacy Services' student/tutor pairs. One such pair is math tutor Richard Reid and High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) recipient, Charleen Scott.

In order to satisfy the criteria for earning the HSED, Charleen needed to complete the content of a math class at 80% or better. I asked Richard to work with her to help her be successful.

Richard, a math tutor at Literacy Services since 2006, struggled in math at an early age. Eventually, turning weakness into strength, he became a math teacher and a specialist in after school tutoring programs for kids having trouble in the subject. His own difficulties with math have given him a special window through which to view his students' challenges.



Charleen and Richard diligently studying together, often for hours at a time.

"Whenever I work with a student, I explain my own history where math was my worst subject." Richard recalls, "The minute math was mentioned, I was afraid because I'd been ridiculed by teachers."

The two began working together a month before the class began. They met for three hours a day, five days a week. Richard would often take Charleen home since without an income, bus fare was hard to come by. He took her to MATC so she could enroll and helped her find the classroom. He spoke with the instructor to get permission to sit in on the classes with Charleen, so that he would know exactly what was being taught and how.

So, for its duration, Richard and Charleen attended the class from 8:00am to 10:00am Monday through Thursday. Each day after class they came to Literacy Services to spend anywhere from two and a half to five hours in tutoring.

Although she was unemployed at the time, Richard observed, "Charleen is a person who has a really, really good work ethic. She was never late to class. She was always there. I was really amazed at her dedication."

Keeping such a demanding schedule required amazing dedication from Richard as well. Beyond the act of simply devoting the time,

Volunteer Opportunity:

GED Tutor

The GED Program is looking for more tutors, like Richard, to assist students with the rigors of GED preparation. Interested persons should call 414-344-5878 for more information.

Richard had to battle through ongoing health issues. On one occasion, he collapsed in the parking lot at MATC twice while on his way to class. After making his way back to his car where he rested for a few minutes, he then continued on to the class and afterwards, to Literacy Services for tutoring.

His commitment struck a chord with Charleen.

"It meant a lot to me. I felt like he really cared because he saw the potential in me. He was coming here every day. If this man can be here everyday and he's sick, I know I can do it. That's what made me believe more in myself. I cried. I'm not going to lie. I cried when I got by myself and thought about it."

"Richard's a good guy. When he works with you, he sticks with you to the end. That's what he did with me. He stuck by me. He's just a caring person. He was there every step from the beginning to the end. I really, really appreciate that."

What does having a secondary credential mean to Charleen?

"It makes me feel like I have a key to some doors. I might not have it to all doors, but right now it will open up the first door for me and I appreciate that because once I get in the first door, I can venture off and do whatever else it is I want to do."

Less than three weeks after earning her HSED, Charleen got permanent, full time employment and is now considering a degree in nursing.

She learned about more than mere academics, however.

"I was never a consistent person. By coming here I started to be more consistent. I started coming every day. Now, I'm more consistent in life with my job and everything. I don't want to miss a day. I feel like it's an important part of anything, to be consistent at what you do. This place taught me that. It taught me a lot of things."

A smile slowly spreads across her face as she adds, **"I'm just happy."**



Charleen's work ethic paid off!

Donate

Open the doors of opportunity for our students by keeping our doors open. From the enclosed donation envelope, to employer matching programs, there are many ways to finance the hard work of our students. A deferred gift can help you balance your financial goals and your charitable interests - all while possibly achieving significant tax benefits. A planned gift, such as a bequest in your will or trust, life insurance designations, or stock donation ensures your support for the adults we serve, well into the future. You'll do more than teach someone today, you'll create a legacy that will impact our community for years to come.

Please let us know if you've named Literacy Services of Wisconsin in your estate. Please call Michaela at 414-344-5878, or connect with her at michaela@literacyservices.org.

In-Kind

Sometimes you can make a difference with something around the house that you no longer use or need. Keep our wish list in mind during this year's spring cleaning.

Wish List

- Bus Tickets
- Coffee, Tea, Creamer & Sugar
- USB Thumb Drives
- Dry Erase Markers
- Copy Paper
- Paper Towels & Facial Tissue
- Hand Sanitizer
- Lysol disinfecting wipes and spray
- Indoor Office/Shade Green Plants
- Orange highlighters
- Hanging File Folders - Letter Size
- Bottom Hanging Folders - Letter Size
- Audio System (PA)
- Buffet (& possibly hutch or bakers rack), no larger than 4' long and 2'deep.

Please contact Robin or Becky at 414-344-5878 before arriving with durable goods. Non-durable goods, like coffee or copy paper, may be brought to the front desk during normal business hours.

Can't tutor? Consider other ways to give ►



50 Years of Philanthropy

By: Ginger Duiven, Executive Director



Founder, Gordon Ralph, and his wife, Jacquie at our 50th Anniversary Kick-off Luncheon.

Gordon Ralph is the founder of Literacy Services of Wisconsin. Gordon is one of our earliest donors giving of his time, talent and treasure to start and sustain our organization. I visited with Gordon recently to learn more about his philanthropy and his passion.

Gordon told me “My special interest is to try to urge people to do some planning so their help to their favorite charity doesn’t end when they end. This guides my personal philanthropy.” He goes on to say, “I took out a life insurance policy and gave ownership to LSW. I could have also listed LSW as my beneficiary. There are bunches of ways to make a planned gift like I did. In my case, I can use the value of the compounding so that at my death there will be something there when I am no longer there.”

I asked Gordon if his upbringing played a role in his decision to give back in this way? He described his belief that all of a person’s experiences play a part in guiding thinking about philanthropy. For him it was his service as an Eagle Scout, membership in Rotary for 38 years and their “Service Above Self” motto that informed his personal philosophy, “It’s part of being a citizen and being part of the world that make me think about people who can be helped.” I asked him what he would like to pass on to future generations. He inspired me with his answer: “My whole life is about helping people reach their potential. I’d like to keep Dr. Laubach’s dream going because it helps people do just that.”

We are grateful to everyone who contributes to support the important work of Literacy Services. In the space below we recognize all of the donors who made gifts of support between December 1, 2014 and April 30, 2015.

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*In memory of our mothers, who instilled
 in us a love of reading*
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Thank You!

It is our commitment to recognize every donor based on the donor's wishes. If your name does not appear as you would expect, please contact Michaela by phone at 414-344-5878, or via email at michaela@literacyservices.org.



LITERACY SERVICES

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LIVE UNITED



Greater Milwaukee
& Waukesha County

The Syl·la·bus

Spring 2015

Literacy Services of Wisconsin Newsletter

In this issue:

- Spring at Literacy Services
- Meet Richard and Charleen, tutor & student at their best
- New curriculum in Adult Basic Education
- And more!

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Upcoming Events

Michael Bowen's *Collar Robber* Book Reading

Tuesday, June 9, 7pm – 9pm, Boswell Book Company, 2559 North Downer Ave., Milwaukee. Author, Michael Bowen, writing as Hillary Bell Locke, will read excerpts from his third mystery novel, *Collar Robber*. He has generously offered to make this reading a fundraiser for Literacy Services. Royalties from purchases of *Collar Robber* at the reading will go to support our spectrum of programs.

Calendar Bookmarks

Accepting New Students! Sign-up for our Initial Assessment Sessions. Call 414-344-5878 for available dates and times. Visit literacyservices.org/events for more information about upcoming events.

May

21st - Volunteer Orientation Noon-1:00pm
25th - Memorial Day Agency Closed

June

3rd - Volunteer Orientation 5:30-6:30pm
9th - Michael Bowen Book Reading
7:00pm, Boswell Books
18th - Volunteer Orientation Noon-1:00pm

July

1st - Volunteer Orientation 5:30-6:30pm
3rd - Independence Day Eve Agency Closed
8th - Quarterly Awards Noon-1:30pm
16th - Volunteer Orientation Noon-1:00pm

Summer Break

No Classes - August 31st - September 7th

50th Anniversary Celebration

September 17th, 2015 - Save the date for a dinner celebration to book-end our fiftieth year!